



GOOD MORNING, MR. CHAIRMAN AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. MY NAME IS TOM CONSTAND, PRESIDENT OF THE BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN, AND I'M PLEASED TO BE REPRESENTING THE BIAMI MEMBERSHIP AND OUR BRAIN INJURY SURVIVOR CONSTITUENTS IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 4466 INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE HOWRYLAK.

SINCE AUTO ACCIDENTS ACCOUNT FOR 30 PERCENT OF ALL BRAIN INJURIES IN MICHIGAN – SECOND ONLY TO FALLS – EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER AND SEVERITY OF SUCH ACCIDENTS DESERVE BOTH OUR SUPPORT AND OUR GRATITUDE.

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THE RECENT UPTICK IN AUTO ACCIDENTS IN MICHIGAN IS DUE IN LARGE PART TO DISTRACTED DRIVING. IN FACT, THE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL HAS FOUND THAT TEXTING WHILE DRIVING IS SIX TIMES MORE LIKELY TO CAUSE AN ACCIDENT THAN DRIVING DRUNK. AS I BELIEVE THE COMMITTEE IS AWARE, TEXTING WHILE DRIVING IS PARTICULARLY ENDEMIC TO OUR YOUNGEST, LEAST EXPERIENCED, AND IN MANY WAYS MOST VULNERABLE DRIVERS, THE TEENS IN OUR COMMUNITIES. ACCORDING TO THE AAA, 94 PERCENT OF THIS COHORT ACKNOWLEDGES THE DANGER OF TEXTING WHILE DRIVING YET 35 PERCENT ADMIT TO DOING IT ANYWAY. ONE RESULT IS THAT OF THOSE TEENS INVOLVED IN FATAL ACCIDENTS, 21 PERCENT WERE DISTRACTED BY THEIR CELL PHONES.

WHILE THE DISTRACTIONS OF CELL PHONES AND TEXTING WHILE DRIVING AFFECT TEENAGE DRIVERS IN PARTICULAR, THE PROBLEM IS TRULY A SOCIETAL ONE AND THUS REQUIRES A SOCIETAL RESPONSE. HOUSE BILL 4466 DOES EXACTLY THAT BY ESTABLISHING CONSEQUENTIAL PENALTIES FOR DISTRACTED DRIVING, PENALTIES WE BELIEVE WILL GIVE PAUSE TO TEENS AS WELL AS ADULTS AND, AS A RESULT, SAVE THE LIVES OF COUNTLESS MICHIGANDERS.

I WHOLEHEARTEDLY URGE THIS COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 4466, WHICH HAS RECEIVED FULL SUPPORT OF THE BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION, OUR MEMBERSHIP, AND THE ESTIMATED 200,000 MICHIGANDERS LIVING WITH BRAIN INJURY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COURTESY.